

Confusion and Conflict over Jesus

Livin' the Life

John 7:25-36

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David Taylor

We are looking at the life of Jesus and the life he promises in our series on the Gospel of John, Livin' the Life. We are in 7:25-36 today, looking at Confusion and Conflict over Jesus. Please turn to John 7:25-36 and read along or listen as we read God's word.

Jesus is a wanted man yet he is teaching in the temple, probably the most prominent place he could preach. Jesus teaching is amazing and his miracles are fairly common place (15, 31) and there lots of question about his identity. The common people from Jerusalem are confused that he is preaching so openly yet those who are seeking to kill him, do nothing (25)! So the common folk are wondering if the Jewish leaders really think Jesus is the Christ, the promised Messiah (26). They are the bible experts so they should know! But the common folk know their bibles also and the Old Testament says that the Messiah will come out of nowhere (Mal 3:1), his origins a mystery. But they all know where Jesus is from and know his family so do not think he can be the Messiah (27). So, there is confusion over Jesus' identity.

So Jesus shouts, I have not come of my own accord. He who sent me is true, and him you do not know. I know him, for I come from him and he sent me (28-29). In other words, you know my human origins, but not my divine origins, I am from heaven, from God himself. I am not here on my own, God sent me and the fact that you do not embrace me, demonstrates that you do not know him! Jesus is being very direct, even offensive. The Jews prided themselves in knowing the true God and he says point blank you don't. If you do not know my identity, Messiah as sent by God, then you do not know the God you claim to know so well. Jesus reveals the Father (1:14); he is the one by which the revelation of God comes (Heb 1:1-4).

Jesus being sent by God tells us several things. First, He is God's representative and more specifically God's unique mediator (Heb 1:1-4). His words are so unique because he is the word incarnate (1:14) who reveals God the Father to humanity (1:18). To know God, you must know Jesus. There is no other way and no other options. Second, Jesus is the God man. He is both divine (1:1; 8:58) and human in the person of Jesus Christ. God took on human nature so that he has both a divine nature and human nature in one person. Third, his divine nature was veiled in human flesh so that it is only seen by faith (1:14). So you cannot say that Jesus is just a good moral teacher. This is not what he says about himself or what the New Testament writers said about him. It is necessary that Christ should be both God and man. Only as man could He be a redeemer for humanity; only as a sinless man could He fittingly die for others. Only as God could His life, ministry, and redeeming death have infinite value and satisfy the demands of God so as to deliver others from death. But not only is there confusion over Jesus' identity, there is also conflict over his identity as seen in the three responses to Jesus' words.

First, some of those in the crowd tried to grab Jesus to arrest him because what he is saying is so offensive to them. It was true but offensive. But no one grabbed him because it was not his time to go to the cross (30). God's plan cannot be thwarted. God's plan was set in motion eternity past (Eph 1:4), so that it was never threatened by Jesus' own humanity nor by sinful humanity of others. In fact, it was the sinful choices of humanity that accomplished God's plan, the death of Jesus (Acts 2:22-24; 4:46-28). Then, many in the crowd believed in him because of the signs he was doing. John describes Jesus' miracles as signs because he saw them as sign posts that point to his identity as the Christ, the Son of God (20:30). So, many in the crowd believe because of the signs but remember sign faith is not necessarily saving faith (2:11; 23; 4:48; 10:38). Signs demonstrate that Jesus has come to undo and reverse the effects of the fall and sin on humanity. He is establishing a new creation and signs are foretaste of what is to come. They also tell us that he must go to the cross; his message and his miracles are all based upon the fact that he will accomplish his mission, the cross and resurrection and ascension. The last response we will look at is the Pharisees and the chief

priest, who get wind of the crowd talking about Jesus being the Christ so they send temple guards to arrest him (32). They want to stop him and kill him if they have to.

Then Jesus warns them that he won't be with them long as he is going back to the one who sent him. They will look for him but not find him because they cannot come where he is going (33-34). Jesus is returning to the Father because he will fulfill his mission, dying on the cross for the sins of humanity. This is a warning that rejecting him excludes them from the promise of eternal life.

Who is Jesus to you? Jesus is the God man of infinite value who did something of infinite value for each of us. He humbled himself by taking on human flesh, living a perfect life so that he would be a perfect sacrifice for our sin. When you see his infinite value and worth, and think about the implications for your life, He will become more valuable and important than TV, than food, than your job, than your family, than living for the weekend, and more important than retirement. Does your life display the infinite value of Jesus Christ? Does he grab your attention, have your affections, and influence your decisions? Don't fool yourself. Christianity is not a game. Jesus is not some peripheral figure in your life, he is not snack food, another form of entertainment. If he is not the most influential person in your life, then you are not following Jesus. If he is not Lord, then he is not Savior. This is why Jesus is truthful and offensive. If you are living for this life and think you can follow Jesus then you are deceived. Jesus will not be manipulated, he will walk away from you just like he did the crowd (6:14-15).

Questions for Life Groups:

1. Why do you think Jesus chose to speak in the temple?
2. How can someone love Jesus' teaching but not embrace it as true?
3. Why did Jesus have to be both God and man?
4. What do you find most interesting about Jesus?
5. What do you think about the statement, if Jesus is not your Lord, then he is not your Savior?
6. Is there biblical truth that you have a difficult time believing or that you resist?
7. Do you struggle with putting Jesus first in your life? Why? How do you combat this?
8. Does Jesus grab your attention and affections more than anything else in life?
9. What other things in your life vie for his attention and your affections?
10. What should you do about this?

